

**Town of Hamilton
Community Preservation Committee
August 13, 2015 Minutes**

Attendees

The meeting was held at Hamilton Town Hall with the following Committee members in attendance: Chair Tom Catalano, Jay Butler, Ray Whipple, Ed Howard, Bob Gray, Keith Glidden, Shawn Farrell, Robert Preston and Peter Britton (arrived at 7:35 p.m.). Community Projects Coordinator Rachel Meketon, Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett, Selectman Marc Johnson also present. With a quorum of CPC members present, Tom Catalano called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Accept July 9th Meeting Minutes

Ed Howard moved to accept the July 9, 2015 meeting minutes. Robert Preston seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

VOTE – Eligibility Applications

The CPC voted on the eligibility of the following CPA project applications:

- *Hamilton Historical Society – Phase 3 of Preserve Our Pictures*, Annette Janes spoke to third phase of Hamilton Historical Society project, page on website for people to access the digitized pictures. Discussion ensued about how this project falls under historic preservation.

Keith Glidden moved to approve \$9,980 for Hamilton Historical Society – Phase 3 of Preserve Our Pictures as an eligible project application under historic preservation. Shawn Farrell seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

- *American Legion Post 194 – Basement Windows & Electrical Upgrade*
Discussion ensued with Post Commander Greg McKenna about historic preservation application for \$65,000 to replace basement windows and to upgrade electrical system. The Legion previously used CPA funds to replace windows on first and second story of the former school building. The Committee members raised issue of CPA funding request for functionality/capital improvement/maintenance of building versus historic preservation, whether there was state (MEMA) funding available if the building were to be used as a storm shelter, how the CPA project requests are exceeding the Town's ability to fund with available CPA funds so eligibility of projects is being scrutinized, if the Legion could provide more information about cost breakdown and due diligence about least cost method.

Jay Butler disclosed that he is a Legion member and noted how focus could be on safety issue associated with electrical system. The Legion is a non-profit, historical organization that accepts donations and rents the hall to anyone not just Legion members to raise

revenue. Butler moves that this project is CPA eligible. Ray Whipple seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

- *Town of Hamilton – Town Hall Rehabilitation*

Discussion was with Director of Planning and Inspections Patrick Reffett about \$550,000 request which consists of \$50,000 for historic evaluation of building for preservation, building needs expansion for full accessibility, all existing space should be fully utilized, there are structural issues so an engineering evaluation is needed, and \$500,000 for construction design.

Discussion addressed feasibility phase dealing with historic/engineering design evaluation, and second phase for design work to prepare for RFP. CPA funds cannot be used for the proposed expansion of the building. The actual construction of the project (\$6 million) would not be a CPA request for the full amount, bonding would be used. Discussion was on how intent is make Town Hall fully usable, that a new administrative building would likely be more expensive than renovating the historical building and building an addition. CPA funds have been used for windows and steps at Town Hall.

The Committee concurred that there are historical aspects of project that could be funded with CPA funds. The historical valuation could be done simultaneously with engineering study to guide how adding onto building could be executed to maintain architecture of existing structure. Discussion was on how time is of the essence due to access and structural issues and need to get building more habitable.

Evaluation will also be on septic system for Town Hall and impact on DPW garage/yard to determine the viability of the site for expansion. The concept of a new administration building was reiterated as well as the need for meeting space (which could be located outside of Town Hall). There is a goal to get the second floor meeting room back upstairs at Town Hall as part of historic preservation. Another concern is Hamilton does not have a good track record of executing good buildings from an architectural standpoint (i.e., possibility of public safety building like structure stuck outside of Town Hall).

Discussion was about how the application was partially eligible from historic preservation but more information was needed, presented in a multiple tiered approach describing historic preservation, rehabilitation and new aspects. Butler moved to table the project application until more refinement can be presented to the Committee at its next meeting. Preston seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

- *Council on Aging – Second floor of the Senior Center*
Discussion ensued on \$98,972 to make second floor comply with fire and building code regulations, and update space to relocate outreach coordinator's office, hold classes, entertainment, instruction and recreation as well as install an ADA compliant elevator and second form of egress out the back side of building. Keith moved to table the application to the Committee's next meeting so the applicant can provide more information (including how adding an elevator is historic preservation). Whipple seconded motion. VOTE: Unanimous.
- *Hamilton Housing Authority – Roof, Gutter & Downspout at 31 Union Street*
The Housing Authority owns a three-family house on Union Street and property has deteriorated. The \$15,500 project is eligible as community housing. Preston moved that this project is eligible. Butler seconded the motion. VOTE: 8-0-1 with Bob Gray abstaining.
- *Essex County Greenbelt Association – Open Space Acquisition*
Discussion ensued with ECGA's Chris Lapointe about the open space acquisition request for Sagamore Hill for the Town to invest \$1,750,000 for conservation restriction in a multi-effort, multi-funded acquisition of 340 acres for protection of properties along scenic roads.

The Committee will have to look carefully at its ability to borrow for this project or the Town Hall project. The CPC and its subcommittee have been analyzing if the CPA surcharge in Hamilton should be changed from 2% to 3% (cost to average household would be \$153 annually for \$400,000 increase in revenue stream and ability to finance large projects). A surcharge change would be initiated by citizen's petition, become a warrant article, voted to ballot at Town Meeting and voted by Town on ballot.

Butler moved that the request is an eligible project. Whipple seconded the motion. Glidden and Preston had reviewed the June 11th and July 9th minutes and meeting recordings so they could vote on the eligibility of this application. Discussion was on partnership on project with Town manager and BOS and report from Town counsel was that Lapointe could submit the project application. VOTE: Unanimous.

CPC Sub-Committee Report

Report was on analysis of 2% versus 3% CPA surcharge, Sagamore Hill project, BOS land acquisition policy that sub-committee had reviewed.

Funding Application from Essex County Greenbelt Association

Discussion with Lapointe addressed state standard conservation restriction including conversation with Town representatives in a sub-committee, and what would be allowed at the property such as agricultural use and grazing. ECGA has done a similar partnership

with Hopkinton for \$900,000 state land grant where 88 farm acres is under CR and bonding was used, Maplecroft Farm in Ipswich (250 acre conservation project) containing conservation easements, agricultural and conservation restrictions, and town invested \$2+ million into the conservation restriction and does not own the land managed by Greenbelt (DCR is a co-holder of CR), another CPA project is Groton farm project with Greenbelt (a combined funding structure with town held conservation restriction).

Lapointe explained for the proposed Sagamore Hill CR the only entity that would co-own the CR is DCR if it invests to defend CR against Greenbelt. If for any reason the CR was extinguished the proceeds from an eminent domain taking would be allocated proportionately between Town of Hamilton and DCR (agency acquisition dollars invested in real estate interest) relative to each parties' original investment.

The Town would not assume the liabilities as owner of CR. ECGA would be responsible for capital improvements, management and maintenance of property. Greenbelt's funding sources are for traditional open space natural resources so selling a portion of land to fund project or to set aside for playing fields would not be considered. Land owners are interested in donating conservation easements and privately fund raised dollars are based on natural landscape remaining in its current state. Greenbelt plans to keep fields open, rotate grasslands, and lease for agricultural use for a small amount of money that would be reinvested in property. Endowments and membership is in place to fund maintenance, and a successor plan is in place that would transfer assets to a similar organization (Trustees of Reservations). There is a composting business on the property and Greenbelt does not have a position about it remaining at the site. If the operation stays there would be a lease agreement and liability insurance. Lapointe offered to investigate what such a lease would bring in today's market.

The Town would not be granted an interest in the other CRs beyond the Sagamore Hill property. The December 31, 2015 deadline is a commitment date, funding does not have to be ready at that time, this is why a fall Town Meeting vote is key. CPA funded land acquisition under open space category is exempt from Chapter 30B. The price on the deal has been negotiated with Donovan LLC and is unlikely to change since it is based on appraisal. An additional appraisal will be done by Bill LaChance of Danvers and the Town will receive a copy of report. ECGA will apply for state's partnership grant in September. If ECGA is successful in getting other funding sources, Hamilton's funding number could go down. There has been no outreach to Air Force relative to base on Sagamore Hill. Discussion addressed how fall Town Meeting could be moved to November 7.

Board of Selectmen Draft Land Acquisition Policy

Discussion ensued with Selectman Marc Johnson about Pirie property chapter land scenario where feedback had been process was too rushed, there was no transparency, and no plan. The policy is designed to reduce divisiveness and create transparency when Town has 120 days to act on chapter land that is for sale. The policy gives structure to the

dialog (including that a topographical map should be required which would have been pertinent with Patton property gift).

The policy could be used for acquisition of open space, watershed uses, Town municipal uses (i.e., DPW, schools, recreation) with goals and objectives transparently articulated. It would also be relative to Chapter 61 properties where Hamilton has right of first refusal, and public process in which there are properties with an identified interest in acquisition according to Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, or the Recreation Master Plan based on priority. The list of Chapter 61 properties is kept in the Town clerk's office relative to rights, and discussions based on plans are held in public hearings after prior discussions with private landowners. The policy will allow a structure to be created to allow private land to be on list for consideration.

Discussion was on the importance of public trust and structure needed to educate the public about why the Town should be in the business of acquiring land (i.e., playing fields or affordable housing). The policy will identify properties already important to the community to be considered for acquisition for conservation, housing, DPW yard, or trails as well as a combination of these. Discussion addressed numerical rankings when prioritizing land for acquisition and how this can be off putting to land owners. The Open Space and Recreation Plan identifies properties and next version of plan could be more specific about the goal for these properties. A land acquisition project has to be justified based on the price, opportunity, market, and willingness from Town Meeting to approve the interest in real estate.

CPA surcharge

Discussion was on how key information could be presented to the public (i.e., at fall Town Meeting) about revenue potential (double the state match) for the Town associated with raising CPA surcharge to fund projects from 2% to 3%. There could be a counter response to get rid of CPA in Hamilton. For a median household the annual CPA surcharge would increase from \$102 to \$153. Details associated with getting citizens' petition started need to be defined. Also needed for 2% surcharge are specifics associated with what bonding/debt obligation would be for Sagamore Hill and Town Hall renovation.

Adjournment

Howard moved to adjourn at 10:05 p.m. Butler seconded the motion. VOTE: Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by Jane Dooley, Minutes Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Thomas Catalano Chairman